



Hendry County Sheriff's Office

General Order 19.25

TITLE: Inventory Searches of Impounded Vehicles	SHERIFF'S APPROVAL: Digital
ORIGINATION DATE: May 29, 2019	REVISION DATE:
RELATED REFERENCES: N/A CFA: N/A	
REVIEW FREQUENCY: 3 YEARS	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: May 29, 2022

I. PURPOSE: To establish procedures for the justification and inventory search of impounded vehicles.

II. SCOPE: This order shall apply to all sheriff's office members.

III. POLICY: This policy is to describe situations wherein an inventory search of an impounded vehicle may be made and the procedures which shall be followed in conducting such a search.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Justification For Impoundment:

1. HCSO Deputies shall impound a vehicle if the:

- a.** Owner is arrested and has no means to remove the vehicle if located on public property or private property without consent of the property owner.
- b.** Vehicle is unattended and illegally parked or otherwise obstructing traffic.
- c.** Vehicle is unattended at the scene of a crash and owner is physically or mentally incapable of deciding what to do with the vehicle.
- d.** Vehicle is abandoned, as defined by pertinent statute or ordinance
- e.** Vehicle is mechanically defective to the extent that, if driven, could menace others on the public highway.
- f.** Vehicle is identified as stolen.

- g.** Vehicle determined to be evidence in a criminal case.

B. Types of Impoundment:

- 1.** At the discretion of the Deputy, impoundment may take the form of:
 - a. Parking the vehicle in a safe location and locking it awaiting further disposition, if danger of vandalism or damage is not significant or if the owner or driver approves
 - b. Conducting an inventory search and then calling for a tow truck operator and having the vehicle hauled to a safe storage area.

C. Purpose of Search Inventory:

- 1.** It is the policy of HCSO to conduct an inventory search of the contents of lawfully impounded vehicles for the purpose of:
 - a. Caretaking and protecting for the owner, personal property found inside such vehicles while in HCSO custody.
 - b. Protecting HCSO members from possible claims and disputes over lost or stolen property.
 - c. Protecting HCSO members from danger of explosive, toxic or other dangerous materials constituting a part of such contents.
- 2.** HCSO Deputies shall make an inventory search of each impounded vehicle if they reasonably believe such search would meet the objectives of the policy set forth in paragraph C.1 above.
- 3.** Inventory searches of impounded vehicles shall not be conducted solely for criminal investigation purposes under this policy.
- 4.** Searches shall include glove compartments, trunks, passenger compartments and all packages, and both open and closed containers.

D. Procedures for Vehicle Impounded as Evidence In a Criminal Case:

- 1.** Inventory searches shall be conducted in the presence of another Deputy or reliable witness.
- 2.** Searches shall include glove compartments, trunks, passenger compartments all packages and both open and closed containers.
 - a. During a search, the Deputy shall exercise care in avoiding any unreasonable damage in opening secured containers, such as locked briefcase, taped bundles and securely wrapped packages.
 - b. Such items shall be treated with care for the further reason that their contents may prove harmful to the searching Deputy.

3. A list of all property shall be made and submitted to the Property and Evidence Unit.
 - a. The list shall enumerate any toxic, explosive or other dangerous materials found

V. GLOSSARY

N/A

Your electronic signature in Power DMS acknowledges you have read this policy and understand it.